

**West Hartford Substance Abuse Prevention Commission (SAPC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 5, 2014**

**Attendees:** Amal Ali, Mary Andrews, Katica Barbul, Helen Drohan, Rob Gross, Mark Grudzien, Sarah Hamilton, Jamahl Hines, Dan Jordan, Joe Kalache, Yifrah Kaminer, Grayson LaCroix, Brooks Loomis, Dan MacGillis, Ben McDonough, Zulynette Morales, Liam Morse, Leo Negron, Sam Newton, Jean Schensul, Stephen Schensul, Philip Simplicio, Grace St. Pierre, Marisa Tamayo, Pat Tyler, Allison Volpe, Tamara Volpe

**Welcome / Introductions / Approve Minutes / Early Departures**

Chairperson Jeff Bersin welcomed everyone and introductions were made. The May minutes were approved.

**Checking the Pulse – How Things Are Going with the SAPC**

Jeff Bersin reiterated our agreement to focus on the household. Youth in attendance thought it would be helpful to increase communication among parents and youth and educate parents on substance abuse. Dan Jordan shared that the SAPC meetings used to be updates and now there is a focus. He talked about connecting Lead by Example (LBE) students with parents through the Community of Concern (COC).

Yifrah Kaminer stressed focusing on interventions for parents and youth through the schools. He cited youth's low perception of harm related to substance use and expressed concern about the legalization of marijuana and youth being able to get medical marijuana from their homes. Yifrah recommended giving youth accurate data on the issue. He suggested explaining to youth why using is not a good idea. He recommended youth receive coaching and data to talk to younger youth about the issue.

**Review of Parent Survey to be used at Celebrate West Hartford – Jean Schensul**

The more extensive version of the parent survey will be distributed in the fall. The abbreviated version will be distributed at Celebrate West Hartford on SAPC letterhead. LBE youth will approach parents in carnival lines and at the Bridge Family Center booth and hand out LBE tee shirts. Lead by Example will have their own booth at Celebrate West Hartford and offer tie dye, henna tattoos, and educational information. Marisa Tamayo stressed the need for middle school involvement. Dan Jordan offered that perhaps the parent survey could be done for middle school parents as well. Dan Jordan suggested working with the existing high school groups that go into the middle schools. Marisa suggested talking with youth about their current experience and giving them advice on how to handle certain situations. Brooks Loomis agreed and suggested that giving youth data would be too robotic. Pat Tyler suggested a combination of data and straight talk with teens about their current experiences. Jay reminded the group that the SAPC has not been targeting the individual level in their approach.

## **Establishing Action Items and Timelines for “Household” Initiative**

Rob Gross suggested a rollout of the parent survey results using the Community of Concern. Jean Schensul stressed the message of keeping households safe and not targeting any specific neighborhoods. Jeff Bersin shared his belief that the focus should be on worrying about your own home. Dan Jordan talked about finding more energizing ways to share survey results. Mary Andrews stressed the importance of the SAPC getting more press; saying the abbreviated survey is the first step and then in the fall showing youth or others the results in an effort to market the work of the SAPC. She stressed the importance of thinking through the best way to release the data and possibly administering the parent survey at the Park Road Parade. The youth present at the meeting recommended using Twitter or Facebook to communicate with other youth. Steve Schensul shared that parents don't necessarily have to lock up substances or not have them in their home, but they do need to discuss the topic with their children. Pat Tyler reminded the group of our previously discussed slogan “Are You Dealing Drugs to Your Kids in Your Home?”

Jeff Bersin asked Commission members to think of possible projects and the corresponding budget for the upcoming year.

One of the youth at the meeting said that they think youth use because their parents use. Dan Jordan expressed the importance of reaching out to different types of parents with differing parenting styles to avoid “preaching to the choir.” Joe Kalache stressed inviting more parents to be part of the SAPC.

Steve Schensul suggested a goal of having an article in 3 publications and/or a West Hartford PATCH article on the topic of accessibility of substances in the home and offering a checklist of questions for parents to rate themselves on their children's level of access and risk. Jeff Bersin reminded the group about the Voices of Prevention blog on PATCH. Helen Drohan suggested using the public access station to spread the word.

Steve and Jean Schensul agreed to draft an article for September and to forward it to Jeff Bersin for review. It was agreed that any articles representing the SAPC would need to be approved by Jeff Bersin prior to distribution.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Tyler

June 23, 2014

